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## **Associated Board of Certifications names New Mexico Environment Department's Operator Certification "Program of the Year"**

(Santa Fe, NM) The Associated Boards of Certification (ABC) named New Mexico Environment Department's Operator Certification Program "Operator Certification Program of the Year" for 2007.

ABC announced the award at its annual conference on Jan. 17. The program was selected by the department's peers in operator certification based on the successful implementation of a database project that streamlined program operations, innovations in online access to certification records for operators, improvements in study guides, customer service, program efficiency, and recent updates to state laws and regulations.

"The proper operation of water and wastewater systems by qualified operators is necessary to protect public health, the quality of New Mexico's ground and surface waters, and the state's enormous capital investment in water and wastewater utility infrastructure," said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. "NMED's Surface and Drinking Water Bureaus worked hard to develop a database that provides a wide variety of information regarding water and wastewater system operations."

All Public Water and Wastewater Systems are required by state regulation to be operated by a certified operator. The department's Operator Certification Program certifies operators as professionals to maintain and operate the many complex aspects of water and wastewater systems.

ABC has been assisting states and provinces with environmental certification programs since 1972. Membership consists of over 90 certifying authorities representing more than 40 states and 10 Canadian provinces which certify over 150,000 water and wastewater operators.

Environment Department staff who contributed to the state's Utility Operator Certification efforts include Dennis Quintana, Marie Ortiz, Violet Miera, Violette Valerio-Hirschfeld, Mike Coffman, and Jeff McGuire.

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